

2020

VULEKA ST MARK'S ANNUAL REPORT



ST MARK'S
NORTHRIDING

'All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.' Isaiah 54 verse 13

It is with the recognition of God's love that this report is presented, hence the opening Bible verse above. As this report is presented, we need to value the peace and love of The Almighty as Vuleka has survived the COVID-19 storm unlike other reputable institutions and organisations. But we celebrate this as we know that it is through God and by God that we are where we are now. At Vuleka St. Marks' our commitment to excellence and the pursuit of education is never separate from our Christian values. As we look back at the past year in this report, we thank God first as the life and the way that we follow. Alone as Vuleka St. Mark's, we would not have been so clever to be where we are academically, spiritually, socially and emotionally. May God continuously protect this school and the children.



PUPIL DEVELOPMENT:

It is new dawn at Vuleka St. Mark's. We experienced a different and difficult year as Covid - 19 paused a threat in the teaching and learning process. However, as **Albert Einstein says, "in the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity"**, we are glad to look at the successes we achieved with our learners in the year 2020.

Our enrolment at St Mark's started the year 2020 at 196 learners but by the end of December we had 204 learners.

One of the pleasing achievements in 2020 was Vuleka St Mark's achieving first place in the annual swimming gala.. Most of our swimmers got medals in different categories. This enhances our aim that we hope to develop a whole individual in our learners, not academically only.

When lockdown came, we introduced online lessons and we are glad that most learners were able to get learning packs via different communication platforms and devices. Teachers held several online lessons, and the introduction of Microsoft Teams improved the teaching and learning process. Assessments and learning packs were done through this platform and this was a breakthrough as parents and learners who felt uncomfortable coming back to school when we reopened schools on the later part of the year used this online process to do schoolwork. This was a new normal as learners had to learn to wear masks, social distance themselves from others and do screening every day at school However, we pride ourselves in that we managed to hold a staggered annual Prize Giving day on 25 and 26 November 2020 for both Foundation and Intersen Phase, respectively. It was a different ceremony as only one parent per learner was invited and most sporting disciplines were not among the prizes due to COVID-19 lockdown which

forced their cancellation. However, every learner went home with a certificate or two and those deserving got awards and trophies such as best overall, best swimmers; the spirit of Vuleka and the principals' award. Staff also went home with appreciation certificates.



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

At the start of the year, we were joined by three teachers, Ms D. Lang (Grade 1); Ms T. Hide (Grade 2) and Mrs G. Bennie (Grade 3). This was a near new phase staff except the Grade 0 teacher, Mrs D. Wilkinson. We were also later joined by Mr. S. Maluleke (to teach Intersen Phase; S.S. P.E. and L.O. Grade 7). Mr S. Maluleke was replacing Mr. G. Scholtz.

We always endeavour for staff to develop and improve skills. This is done during `meetings and Vuleka staff workshops. We held several staff meetings especially when it came to lockdown.

This was to prepare staff for online teaching and sending of teaching packs to learners. By the end of the year, there was a traceable improvement on this as revealed by the work sent to learners online, the quality of communication among teachers, learners and parents using different communication channels. Teachers were able to hold virtual lessons and mark learners' work. However, all was not gold as some learners were not so lucky to join such classes or get online work. This was due to different family economic set up such as not having devices to use (smart phones and laptops) or no data to download work or be connected. This is where the use of printed hard copies of work was used and benefited.



PARENT PARTNERSHIP

“Behind every young child who believes in himself is a parent who believes first”, Matthew Jacobson.

Building strong relationships with parents is essential and the effective partnerships between our school and our parents are based on mutual trust and the shared responsibility for the successful education of our children. This was indeed a year where parents showed that they believed in the education of their children as we received support from them in different ways. First was the financial support by paying fees for the learners. This was done by parents and donors. Second was donations in cash and kind from donors, school friends and parents. Among many donations, we received more than R4 000 cash from sales and fundraising activities supported by parents such as civvies, heritage and spring days to mention a few. We also received gifts in kind such as toiletries, stationery and sanitizers from individuals and parents. We can not forget the support given by our parents towards the prize giving ceremony where we got donations of stationery and snacks. This is the partnership that exists between Vuleka St. Mark's, parents and donors. We wish to consolidate this partnership as we begin the year 2021 where more can be done in the classrooms. The foundation of such was laid through carpeting of two Foundation Phase classes and the installation of six projectors in the classes. This we could not have done without the huge support of our parents, donors, school management, staff and learners.



DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

As a school we realised that lockdown brought some new ways of doing things, especially in communication. In March 2020, we started engaging learners online as we sent hard copies of work and had lessons online. WhatsApp, Class dojo and emails were the frequent ways we used to reach out to our parents and learners. Our teachers were trained on using Zoom and Microsoft Teams and by year end, most teachers were much better in terms of communicating with parents and learners as well as doing assessments online with those learners working from home. We also managed to buy three projectors for the Foundation Phase department towards year end. We will work hard to buy laptops for our computer laboratory and find ways of making sure that teachers are using school devices to do schoolwork.



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Vuleka St. Mark's depends on fees paid by parents and donations from friends and partners. 2020 was not a good year for most of our parents and therefore some struggled to pay fees. However, the initiative by Vuleka management to make follow-ups and make arrangements on fee-payment helped a lot. Vuleka also did the yearly raffle sheet, Karaoke dance and the Spring mania. It is good to mention that Vuleka St. Mark's had several learners walking away with prizes in these fundraising activities.

We also did venue Fundraising activities where more than R5 000 was raised to improve our own compass finances. We thank parents, learners and all those who helped us in this regard.



The successes we have had far outweighed the failures we experienced as a school. We would like to thank the wisdom of the School Council board, the wise leadership of our Executive Head Mr S. Majola, the whole Vuleka management team, staff, parents, donors and children for the different roles that they played as we went through the year 2020.

Our wish is to do more and keep the flame of Vuleka St Mark's on in the year 2021 and onwards. This we can do together. Ken Blanchard sums it up, "None of us is as smart as all of us".

*Amlanani Tony Khupe
Headmaster*